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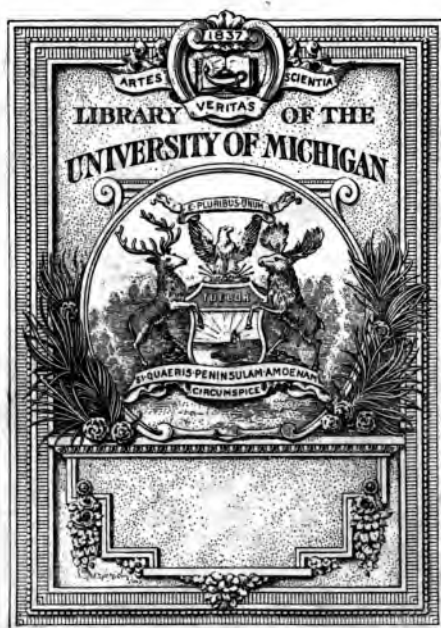
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## TRAINING FOR LIBRARIANSHIP

Reasons for training. Why should one need training in order to fill a position in a library? What is there to do that requires training? What do you do at a library school or, what do you find to do in a library when there isn't a crowd of people to be waited on? These are questions that are put every day to librarians, to library commissions, to the faculties of library schools, and to library school students.

The need of information on the subject seems so general and so pressing that the Committee on Library Training of the American Library Association, has been asked to put into form such information as is available, to be circulated in reply to questions, or in communities in which library interests are assuming prominence.

While the most necessary preparation for librarianship, as for other professions, is a good general education, and the most necessary natural qualification is common sense, there is a technical side in the work of every institution for the mastery of which neither a general education nor common sense is sufficient equipment.

There are records to be kept, methods to be devised or learned, small, daily needs to be met by devices of one kind or another, books to be selected and bought and made useful; rules to be considered, ways of attracting and holding readers, ways of raising money, of securing help; buildings and equipment to study, — indeed, there are more subjects of study and consideration than could easily be enumerated.

Only a few years ago, librarians were obliged, each to work out his own solution of every problem, for want of any recognized authority in such matters or any general

consensus of opinion among them. While it was possible in those days to do the work in this way, it still meant great waste of energy and duplication of work; and in these days, with libraries springing up like mushrooms, and librarians confronting problems and situations hardly imagined in the earlier time, it would be next to impossible for their work to be done economically and otherwise satisfactorily, if there were not some recognized sources of instruction to give approximate uniformity of methods, to inculcate the best aims and impart a desirable spirit to the workers, and to present to them in concise form the accepted principles of the profession.

**Library schools.** Hence the founding of Library Schools, which in one, two, three or four years will prepare the satisfactory student to take his or her place in the library world, more or less well equipped to deal with the questions that arise in all libraries.

The school connected simply with a library may extend its course over a shorter or a longer period of time, at its own discretion; the school connected with a college or university must usually arrange its work to fit into the college curriculum, on account of students who are doing the work along with regular college work, and therefore gives a less concentrated course during a longer period, say three or four years.

**Summer library schools.** For the librarian who, already at work, is unable to give up his or her position to attend a school and secure a full course, but who wishes to acquire what he or she can in the way of training, the summer library school has been introduced, giving brief outlines of the most necessary parts of library work and requiring only a few weeks' attendance. It is not a short cut to a library position for those who are without one, for as a rule, it does not receive such persons as students, and even for the actual librarian who enters, the summer school often proves the stimulating influence required to convince the

student of the necessity for further study and instruction, thus making itself a feeder for the full course school.

**Apprentice classes.** Apprentice classes may be resorted to for training in library work, if advantage cannot possibly be taken of the courses offered by the schools, but they go only a little way toward the necessary preparation and do not give the candidates thus prepared any standing in the profession. The apprentice class is allowable and even advisable for libraries wishing to form a substitute list or an eligible list for minor positions, but assistants trained in this way should not be and generally are not promoted to better positions without successive examinations and tests, and, even with these, do not as a rule reach the best positions, for want of preliminary educational preparation. The profession in general disapproves of the library, which, having trained apprentices, finally sends out those it cannot use to look for positions in other libraries, armed with letters or other credentials. These apprentices have been trained in the methods of only one library, often they have done only the work the library needed to have them do rather than the work they needed for training, and they are poorly fitted to compete with the well prepared student. Their entrance into the field has a tendency to lower salaries and standards.

**Correspondence courses.** Of the correspondence course, all that can be said is that it is better than nothing for the librarian who cannot leave her position even for six or eight weeks without losing it. It is one of the short cuts which cannot possibly give thorough training, which omits the very important element of practice, which cannot be regulated by any authority, and which therefore creates an opening for irresponsible teaching by incompetent persons.

The question of establishing correspondence courses has been considered by several of the library schools, but the difficulties of giving thorough instruction in this way and the probability that an authorized correspondence course would seem to excuse students who could take the school

courses from doing so, have so far prevented the establishment of an official correspondence course without any residence feature.

**Other aids.** For librarians and assistants who are holding positions and who cannot attend even the summer schools, some State commissions and associations have arranged for library institutes or round tables. These are meetings at which one or two librarians, school-trained or experienced in the best methods, meet with the librarians of a given locality and talk over methods, the best ways of solving certain problems inevitable for the small library, etc., afterward answering questions by letter or visiting the libraries concerned, thus keeping in touch with the isolated librarian and her conditions. The time will probably come when every State commission will include some officer or officers expressly for this work of instruction.

The Library Commission of a State may always be reached by addressing a letter to it at the State Capitol. It is informed and can be consulted as to the sources of library training within the State.

#### States having Library Commissions

California (State Library)	Missouri.
Colorado.	Nebraska.
Connecticut.	New Hampshire.
Delaware.	New Jersey.
Georgia.	New York (State Library)
Idaho.	North Dakota.
Indiana.	Ohio.
Iowa.	Oregon.
Kansas.	Pennsylvania.
Maine.	Vermont.
Maryland.	Virginia. (State Library)
Massachusetts.	Washington.
Michigan.	Wisconsin.
Minnesota.	

A number of State Normal Schools have given courses in library economy in connection with their summer schools for teachers, but these have been intended only to fit teachers to take care of their school-libraries and should not be regarded as a substitute for a library school course.

A number of colleges and universities have introduced courses in bibliography, chiefly with a view to the training of the student in subject-bibliography.

**Librarianship as a profession.** Librarianship as a calling has several distinct advantages for the man or woman of good education, desiring to be of service, who is fond of books and who has executive ability.

While it does not appeal to those who gage all callings by their money returns, the librarian, if equal to his position, is associated with all the forces that make for social and educational improvement and is recognized as working for the community rather than for himself.

For the individual who loves books it offers the privilege of working in the atmosphere of books, and of communicating his enthusiasm to others and putting his knowledge of books at their service.

For the possessor of executive ability, work requiring personal initiative is always almost its own reward, and a library offers many opportunities for the exercise of such a gift.

For one, who, in addition to these endowments, has the wish to help and serve others, there is no better field and few in which intelligent work is more needed.

The work of the average library, while it allows fewer holidays and vacations than that of teaching and has longer hours, yet has almost no disciplinary features, and hence means less strain on the nerves than teaching in the average school. It requires, however, sound health in those who would pursue it successfully. It offers also more variety and a larger field of interest than the average teaching position.



